

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are pending in this application. By this response, the specification and claim 1 has been amended. Reconsideration and allowance based on the above-amendments and following remarks are respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the indication of claims 4-22 as containing allowable subject matter.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over applicant's prior art Figs. 16-18 in view of Tanaka (U.S. Patent No. 5,627,832). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In the rejection of independent claim 1, the Office Action utilizes the prior art illustrated by Figs. 16-18 of applicant's specification to provide the general master slave relationship recited in the claim. Further, the Office Action relies upon Tanaka to provide a general concept of synchronization of signals transferred between higher and lower hierarchy switching centers. The Office Action relies upon the information known to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide a round robin polling order implemented within the master/slave system.

The present invention provides a master/slave system incorporating multiplexers each configured and utilized in a manner that improves sampling time in information transfers between management and slave devices. The multiplexers of the present invention are configured to incorporate a substantially

constant delay time through each relay point. This eliminates the fluctuation and delay times and thereby improves sampling times.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, wherein the delay time in transferring the specific information from the slave device through the at least one multiplexer to the master device and vice versa is substantially constant from each relay point within the at least one multiplexer.

Neither Figs. 16-18 nor Tanaka suggest or disclose utilizing a multiplexer in which the delay time for transferring data within the relay point of the multiplexer is substantially constant, as claimed by applicants. In fact, as discussed in the background section of the specification, the multiplexer arrangement in the master slave device of Figs. 16-18 creates a fluctuation in a transfer delay time. Further, this fluctuation increases with the number of multiplexers through which the specific information passes. (See pages 7-10)

Further, applicants maintain the previous arguments that one of ordinary skill would not look to combine the master/slave system of Figs. 16-18 with the synchronization signals of a local switching center which is taught by Tanaka. Tanaka system teaches synchronization of time division switches and synchronization signal generators. Tanaka does not teach or suggest matching sampling times through master/slave devices via multiplexers. The system of Tanaka and the system of Figs. 16-18 are entirely different in function and design. In order to incorporate Tanaka's teachings, the system of Figs. 16-18 would have to be redesigned to include the synchronization scheme. A general teaching of

synchronization is not enough for one of ordinary skill to conclude the use of specific information in the manner claimed as incorporated within the master/slave multiplexer network to obtain matched sampling times. Thus, one of ordinary skill would not look to Tanaka to teach the matching of sampling times.

Based on the above, the combination of the disclosed prior art in Figs. 16-18 and Tanaka do not provide the claimed invention. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

CONCLUSION

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-3 are distinguishable over the cited references. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Chad J. Billings (Reg. No. 48,917) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Appl. No. 09/409,681

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 
Michael R. Cammarata, 39,491

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

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